



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Environmental Assessment for rehabilitation of Hermit Road available for public review and comment

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Rehabilitation of Hermit Road is now available for public review and comment, announced Park Superintendent Joseph Alston.

Grand Canyon National Park is proposing to rehabilitate the historic, approximately seven-mile long Hermit Road, located on the South Rim between Grand Canyon Village and Hermits Rest. Proposed actions include widening and resurfacing the road, improving existing trails, overlooks and parking areas, and constructing a multi-modal greenway trail.

Hermit Road and most of its associated overlooks and parking areas are historic, designed and constructed in 1934 – 1935 by the Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service, and retain a high degree of integrity. However, overall road condition is poor and does not meet current safety standards. The road is too narrow for safe bus passage, especially when bicyclists and pedestrians are on the road. Pedestrian and bicycle use occurs in part because existing trails are inadequate for both pedestrians and bicycles. In some areas there is not room between the roadway and rim for an adequate trail. However, many park visitors walk or bike between scenic overlooks along Hermit Road. Pedestrian and bicycle use, combined with shuttle buses, tour buses and other vehicle traffic on this narrow two-lane road, creates a safety hazard.

The EA evaluates three alternatives for addressing the purpose and need for action. The EA also evaluates taking only minimal action (Alternative A, No Action) to address critical safety concerns for comparison with the action alternatives. The preferred alternative includes 1) widening the road from its current width of 18-20 feet to a uniform width of 24 feet; 2) constructing an approximately three-mile long greenway trail from an area known as The Abyss to Hermits Rest on the road's north side; 3) minimal improvements to the unpaved rim trail between Powell Point and The Abyss; 4) rehabilitation of the historic paved West Rim Trail between Grand Canyon Village and Maricopa Point; 5) constructing a connecting trail around the Orphan Mine area between Maricopa Point and Powell Point; and 6) making improvements for safety and accessibility at ten of the overlooks and parking areas along Hermit Road.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, calls on federal agencies to consider environmental issues as part of their decision making process and to involve interested parties in the process. The NEPA process was initiated in June 2004 with a public scoping letter and again in June 2005, soliciting issues and concerns on preliminary project proposals. Responses to these scoping efforts were used during preparation of the EA, which is the next step in the NEPA process.

The EA can be reviewed online at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=65&projectId=16840&documentID=17008>

Comments can be submitted online at the same web address (the preferred method) or mailed to Joseph F. Alston, Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Attention: Office of Planning and Compliance, P.O. Box 129 (1 Village Loop for express mail), Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023. Comments will be accepted through November 6, 2006.

For questions and additional information about this project, or for copies of the EA, please contact Debbie Lutch, Project Planning Leader at (928) 774-0095.

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